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DEFINITION AND CONTEXT

Chag HaShavuot, also known as the “Feast of Weeks”, refers to the seven weeks that start in Pesach and end on the sixth of Sivan. Shavuot is one of the “three pilgrimage festivals” of the Hebrew calendar (along with Pesach and Sukkot) in which Am Israel used to walk to Jerusalem to bring their offerings to the Temple. Hence, this holiday is also known as Chag HaBikkurim (the Holiday of the First Fruits), alluding to first harvesting of wheat and other fruits that were offered in Beit HaMikdash. In addition to its earthly significance, the chag has a spiritual aspect which is reflected in the name “Zman Matan Torateinu” (“the time of the giving of the Torah”), this being the day in which Bnei Israel received the Ten Commandments. This event not only allowed the consolidation of our people but also contributed to the western cultural values, ideas and principles relevant to today.



DID YOU KNOW?

- Our Tnua has its own Ten Commandments: “The Commandments of the Noari”. These commandments have existed since the beginning of Hanoar Hatzioni and represent the commitment of its chaverim to the Tnua as well as the moral principles on which the education we impart to our chaverim is based. The Commandments of the Noari are:

1. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni must be honest and tell the truth.
2. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni is loyal to the land, the culture and the Jewish people.
3. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni’s thoughts, words and actions are pure.
4. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni shows solidarity and loyalty to all the members of the movement.
5. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni is disciplined.
6. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni is happy and vital.
7. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni loves nature.
8. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni is hardworking and knows how to sustain himself or herself independently.
9. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni cares about his physical and spiritual development.
10. The chaver of Hanoar Hatzioni is a pioneer of the idea of Zionist Realization.

- The Darkenu not only mentions the importance of the event of the Giving of the Ten Commandments for the Jewish people at that time, but also emphasizes the connection it currently has with each one of us, in general, and with us as educators of Hanoar Hatzioni, in particular.

“In Mount Sinai (the giving of the Ten Commandments), the basic concepts that govern the interhuman relationships were set. Throughout the generations, we have witnessed a continuous phenomenon of spiritual creation which allowed us to develop the same basic precepts detached from the Ten Commandments while adjusting them to the changing reality. These moral categories are those that served us in the past and still govern our national and social conception. We perceive ourselves as a link in the chain of generations, which begins with the giving of the Ten Commandments and continues throughout the Jewish history with its ups and downs. ... As a people, we demand our right to independent existence. This demand is based on the historical recognition of our uniqueness and on the right to preserve the spiritual creation of our people. The moral principles that characterize the Jewish people since the dawn of their history serve as a guideline in our path as an educating movement.”





THE CHAG'S VALUES



SYMBOLS AND CUSTOMS

• PARADES IN KIBBUTZIM AND MOSHAVIM

With the departure of Am Israel to the Gola, the significance of Shavuot changed to focus mainly on the spiritual aspect since we stopped having land to cultivate and a Temple to which we could bring the first fruits. However, the creation of the Kibbutzim and Moshavim in Eretz Israel allowed Am Israel to reconnect with the national significance of the holiday. Today, in the kibbutzim of the country, Shavuot is an occasion of great festivities and parades where the agricultural element, a product of us working the land, is the main focal point.

• THE READING OF THE BOOK OF RUTH

The Book of Ruth tells the story of a Moabite woman who, after being widowed and faced with the possibility of returning to her people, customs and traditions, decides to continue her life adopting the fundamental principles of Am Israel. Ruth's choice relates to the spiritual significance of "Chag Matan Torah": her choice to convert to Judaism affirms her intention to "receive the Torah".

Ruth's story continues in Israel. There she finds herself in need of going to the field plots and gleaning the leftovers of the harvest left as charity to the poor, to feed herself and her mother-in-law, Naomi. In the fields she meets Boaz, the owner of the field and a distant relative of hers, whom she later marries. This marriage leads to their descendant, King David. These events take place precisely at harvest time, relating the text to the agricultural aspect of the holiday (Chag HaBikkurim). In addition, the text reveals many values and principles such as solidarity, responsibility and human dignity among others.

• TIKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

According to our sages, the night before the giving of the Torah, Am Israel went to sleep and had to be awakened for the great event. As a way of "repairing" this act, the generations that followed committed to studying all through the night until it was time to receive the Torah.



CHAG RELATED QUOTES

”התינוקות שנולדו זה עתה, הם הביכורים היפים ביותר שיש לישראל”

“The newborn babies are the best Bikkurim Israel has to offer.”



CHAG RELATED ARTICLES

SHAVUOT: TIME TO GIVE

Tamar Kohan Vaisenbrut, Rosh Chinuch of Hanoar Hatzioni B'Paraguay

The Jewish vision of Hanoar Hatzioni strengthens the aspiration to create a more just society based on values such as solidarity, responsibility for others and integrity, among others. This is the reason why in the Ken Nitzanim of Paraguay, we see the festival of Shavuot as a unique and particular opportunity to use these values and put them into practice in everyday life.

By reaffirming our commitment to the Torah during the chag, we assume the responsibility not to forget our traditions, values and teachings as we continue to be a millennial people. With this thought, as Chaverim of Hanoar Hatzioni, we build a legacy in the life of our Chanichim, aspiring to build together a better world.

SHAVUOT: UNITING EVERYDAY LIFE TO THE SPIRITUAL

Yuval Nemirovsky, Mazkirut Olamit Hanoar Hatzioni

On the sixth of Sivan, Shavuot is celebrated. The holiday's name derives from the Hebrew word “Shavua” (week) since seven weeks are counted from Pesach to this holiday. However, Shavuot has other names, one of them being Chag HaBikkurim – the Festival of First Fruits – and another is Chag Matan Torah – the Holiday of the Giving of the Torah. It is essential to understand the connection between the two topics. First: The first fruits are related to the agricultural work and the everyday world. Shavuot reminds us when we should harvest and be connected to our day-to-day work. Second: The giving of the Torah is linked to the spiritual and moral world. ... We can understand our Judaism and Zionism if we unite the idea of the Festival of the First Fruits and the idea of the Holiday of “Matan Torah.” ... We must have both dimensions in order to reach wholeness as a people. The festival of Shavuot is yet more proof that our rebirth as a society unites the spiritual and the mundane, the Jewish identity and the space to develop as a people (the land).

SHAVUOT

Moshe Glikson, Our Sources of Inspiration, Haaretz, Shavuot Night, 5694

Shavuot is not only and not primarily the Holiday of Bikkurim; it is first and foremost the holiday of the giving of our Torah. This marvelous and one-of-a-kind concept with which the Jewish people were blessed, the concept of Torah, is more than a religion, set of laws, mindset and source of knowledge alone, but includes an original and essential blend of worldviews, lifestyle, culture and treasures of national spirit and soul. The Torah is the supreme concept which reflects the national uniqueness of the Jewish people in the world and is connected in the nation's consciousness and sentiment to the holiday of Shavuot.



ZMAN LE PEILUT

HOW DO YOU CELEBRATE SHAVUOT IN YOUR KEN?

Take a picture and share it with the rest of the chaverim of Hanoar Hatzioni across the world

VISIT OUR WEBSITE FOR THE COMPLETE
VERSIONS OF THE ARTICLE:

www.hholamit.org.il

